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ABSTRACT

A practicum was designed for parents to acquire the understanding, skills, resources, materials, and wherewithal to support the emergent literacy development of their young (preschool) children. A "Home-School Library" was established for students to have developmentally appropriate books available for parents to read to their children at home daily. Literacy workshops were conducted demonstrating activities and the importance of parents upon the emergent literacy development of their young children. Parent-child activities involving literacy were held in the classroom to enhance parental involvement. Written and oral surveys of the students (about 20) and their parents were conducted to determine the literacy needs of both groups. Results indicate that parents did not have the wherewithal to support the emergent literacy development of their young children. Analysis of data after the implementation had been completed revealed that: (1) parents had a variety of books available to read to their children daily; (2) the number of parents reading books to their children daily increased; (3) the number of parents participating in parent-child activities in school had increased; and (4) the number of parents indicating that they felt "more confident" reading to their children increased. (Contains 39 references and one table of data. Appendixes presents survey instruments, parent comment sheets, bookmarks, and the texts of a story and a song.) (Author/RS)

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ED 377 442

A Classroom-Home Library: Supporting the Emergent Literacy Development of Preschool Children Through Parental Involvement

by

Lisa M. Lauer

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Cluster 58

A Practicum I Report Presented to the Ed.D. Program
in Child and Youth Studies in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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1994

PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

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This practicum report was submitted by Lisa Lauer under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

Approved:

October 2, 1994
Date of Final Approval of Report

Ann E. Fordham
Ann E. Fordham, Ph. D., Adviser

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The idea of creating a project whereby students, parents, educators, and the community worked together to support literacy was born out of the fascination students exhibited while engaging in activities with books. The writer is indebted and grateful to many for the creation and implementation of this project. In particular, the writer would like to thank the students and parents for their participation, enthusiasm, and support for this project.

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ABSTRACT

A Home-School Library: Supporting the Emergent Literacy Development of Preschool Children Through Parental Involvement. Lauer, Lisa M., 1994: Practicum Report, Nova Southeastern University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Emergent Literacy/Parental Involvement/ Early Childhood Education/ Home-School Library/ Literacy Workshops/At-Risk Preschool Children

This practicum was designed for parents to acquire the understanding, skills, resources, materials, and wherewithal to support the emergent literacy development of their young children. A Home-School Library was established for students to have developmentally appropriate books available for parents to read to their children at home daily. Literacy workshops were conducted demonstrating activities and the importance of parents upon the emergent literacy development of their young children. Parent-child activities involving literacy were held in the classroom to enhance parental involvement.

Written and oral surveys of the students and their parents were conducted to determine the literacy needs of both groups. From these surveys, the writer was able to determine the evidence of the problem that parents did not have the wherewithal to support the emergent literacy development of their young children.

Analysis of the data after the implementation had been completed revealed that parents had a variety of books available to read to their children daily; the number of parents reading books to their children daily increased; the number of parents attending literacy workshops increased; the number of parents participating in parent-child activities in school had increased; and, the number of parents indicating that they felt "more confident" reading to their children increased.

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Permission Statement

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August 15, 1994

Lisa M. Lauer

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

The setting for this practicum was in a preschool center located in a small, southern, rural town in the United States, just outside a major port city. The center is one of two centers which is primarily federally funded and governed, and is supported by a public school system, state and local governments, and private businesses. During the 1993-94 school year, this public school system, in which this preschool resides, had a total student enrollment of 9,548, and provided education and related services for students who were at-risk 4-year-olds through twelfth graders. The school population was 64.2% White, 34% Black, 1.4% Hispanic, .3% Asian, and .1% Native-American. The preschool program, which began in 1980 serving 20 students, provided education and services for 180 students and their families. The center in which this practicum was implemented served 80 students and their families. In contrast with the public school population, the population of the preschool was 75% Black, 23% White, 1.4% Hispanic, .4% Native-American, and .2% Asian.

The town is an industrial community, where occupations are mainly blue-collar and related to the oil and gas industries, or related to the fishing and hunting industries. Since the decline in the oil and gas industry in the 1980's, unemployment has risen significantly.

The rapid growth in the number of children and families at-risk needing services at the preschool level since 1980 clearly reflected the effects of unemployment on the community. The population of the town was multi-ethnic, multi-cultural as was indicated by the population of the school system.

The socioeconomic status of the preschool population was below-poverty and predominately Black. The majority of the households were headed by single females, many of whom had not completed high school. The number of parents participating in school functions was very low. Transportation to school functions was a major problem for parents, particularly since the center is located in a rural setting.

Writer's Work Setting

The preschool center in which this practicum took place contains four self-contained classrooms with 20 students, one teacher, and one teacher's assistant each. Administrators, staff, and other related personnel were located in a separate building five miles away from the preschool center. The preschool center was one of three buildings. The other two buildings housed the Association for Retarded Citizens (ARC) and the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) programs.

A speech therapist, nurse, and other service-related personnel were provided periodically by the public school system. The teachers in the preschool center possessed educational degrees with certification in early childhood education at the preschool level. The teacher assistants possessed a Child Development Associate (CDA).

Transportation for the preschool students was provided by the public school system. Students arrived at school by 7:00 a.m. and received breakfast, lunch, and snack during

the course of the daily routine. The preschool also provided medical and dental care for those students requiring attention.

Home visits by teachers, staff, and teachers' assistants were also part of the preschool program. The preschool program was established to promote the social, emotional, physical, language, and cognitive skills of below-poverty students. Teachers, teachers' assistants, and staff viewed the successfully developing child in a holistic manner. They recognized that the academic needs of the child be met, as well as affective needs, and health, safety, and security within the child's home and school environment. This practicum occurred in the writer's classroom of 20 preschool children. The parents and children were invited to participate in the project.

Writer's Role and Responsibilities

The writer has been associated with young children since her preteen years. Being involved in job responsibilities such as dancing instructor, camp counselor, and Girl Scouts has given the writer valuable experience with young children. After obtaining an Associate of Science degree in Office Administration from a local university, the writer pursued and completed a Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education, with a minor in Early Childhood Education and certifications in elementary, kindergarten, and nursery education. The writer was able to work in preschool settings parttime while her children were young, and then pursued fulltime work once her youngest child completed the third grade. With the help and encouragement of her family, the writer pursued and completed a Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction in Early Childhood Education, and is a member of two academic honor societies. The writer is also a member of and has been a

presenter at local and national early childhood organizations, and is in the process of obtaining a doctorate degree. The writer has had over fifteen years' experience in the education of preschool and elementary-aged children, who have been socially advantaged, middle-class, as well as sociodisadvantaged.

The writer was in her third year of teaching at this particular preschool center. The role and responsibility of the teacher was to provide a safe, secure, and healthy developmentally appropriate learning environment whereby students could progress from one developmental stage to the next at their own rates and in their own times. Attaining social skills through a cognitively-based approach was the main goal of this preschool program.

The teacher was viewed as an extension of the home role models and worked in partnership with the parents. The responsibilities of the teacher included being a facilitator of learning and providing any necessary medical and/or dental visits for the children. Recognizing that the parent is the most influential teacher, the teacher worked closely with children's families by making visits periodically to their homes and providing workshops for parents. Since the writer tried to work closely with the parents, any social services that a family needed were directed towards the social services coordinator by the teacher. The writer viewed her position as a privilege bestowed upon her by the parents who had entrusted her with the welfare and education of their children during the most productive hours of the day.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

Many disabling conditions have contributed to young children being at-risk for learning and the development of literacy. Lack of parental education, teen-age pregnancies, single-parent homes with absent fathers, little or no job opportunities, socioeconomic constraints, governmental policies which do not support families, irresponsible behavior, ignorance, crime, violence, drugs, and apathy had negatively influenced the development of these children, their parents, their families, and society. Parents who had not completed their education may harbor painful memories that the school setting was not a welcoming place. Therefore, they did not support nor felt comfortable reading or working on educational activities with their children at home. Children, whose parents did not support education at home, were not respectful of the benefits of education and literacy, and developed a disrespectful attitude towards authority figures.

When the writer initially began working with this population of children, she was amazed to find how overwhelmed the children were with books. The children acted as if they had very little or no prior experience or knowledge that books existed. Many

children became totally captivated with the book covers, and could not progress beyond to the pages of the books. This discovery by the writer alerted her that these children had little or no prior literacy experiences. During informal conversations with the writer, the children indicated that they had little or no books at home, and were very seldom read to by adults. Children also indicated that they did not have writing materials in their homes. As one child stated, "My Mamma ain't got no paper and writing stuff."

In addition, the writer discovered that many of the students came to school lacking not only literacy experiences, but also social skills, personal hygiene skills, language skills, and experiential learning skills. The students indicated a lack of respect for adults, authority, and peers by using verbal and physical abuse to solve problems. These children were entering school deficient in academic and social skills.

During parent interviews, the writer found many parents were not only socioeconomically disadvantaged, but also with little education, parenting skills, experiential learning skills, and awareness of their impact as role models on the development of their children. Many parents felt that their responsibilities and impact as parents ended once their children entered school. As one parent indicated, ". . from 7 to 3 she's yours, from 3 to 7, she's mine."

Many parents brought friends or relatives to help them complete enrollment papers, indicating a low literacy achievement level. During the school year, parents enjoyed participating in field trip activities with their children. The writer discovered that many parents had little or no prior experiential learning outside their immediate rural environments, sand eagerly anticipated field trip experiences. In fact, during a field trip to

the airport, parents strongly expressed a desire for the "wing pins" generally given to children by the airline. However, there seems to be an apathy for parental involvement in the school. Although workshops, parent-child activities, home visits, and an "open-door" policy existed to encourage parent participation in and between the classroom and the home, many parents were not seen at all, during the school year.

Specifically, parents did not have the understanding, skills, resources, or materials necessary to provide their children with literature and language arts experiences in the home. The problem was that the parents did not have the wherewithal to support the emergent literacy development of their young children.

Problem Documentation

Students entering the preschool setting were lacking in literacy skills and experiences. After completing an oral survey of the students, 15 out of 20 students responded that they did not read or "just sometimes" read books at home. These students also indicated that they did not have any or had very few books available to them at home. The same 15 out of 20 students indicated that they had little or no "writing stuff" available to them to use at home. The majority of these students had little or no literacy experiences in the home.

Test scores on the Daberon-2 Screening for School Readiness administered at the beginning of the school year, indicated that only 2 out of 20 students met or exceeded their chronological age developmentally. In fact, 4 out of 20 students who were at least 4 years old chronologically scored below 3 years, developmentally. These same 4 students were almost nonverbal at the time the test was administered. These results indicated a lack of experiential and literacy background.

In a response to a survey (Appendix A), 17 out of 20 parents indicated that they had very little time, limited resources, and limited or no transportation to acquire books to read with their children. Using the same survey, 17 out of 20 parents responded that they had only 4 to 7 books on average, available at home to read with their children. Seventeen out of 20 parents on the survey indicated that they only felt "somewhat confident" reading books to their children.

There was little evidence to indicate parental involvement in the school setting. Attendance records showed an average of only 3 out of 20 parents attended workshops regularly throughout the year. In fact, the same parents attended the workshops for most of the school year.

To be eligible for enrollment in this preschool program, parents needed to prove that their income was "below poverty" by providing documentation as stipulated by the federal government. This proof substantiated that the children and their families were socioeconomically disadvantaged.

Documentation required for registration into this program showed that only 3 out of 20 children were from "intact families", with both a mother and a father living in the home. Of the 20 families surveyed, 17 children were from a single-female headed household. Oral interviews of the parents of these 17 children indicated that these children had little or no support (financial or otherwise) or contact with their fathers. Documentation also showed that half of the parents had not completed their high school education nor received a GED, resulting in deficient educational and literacy skills.

Causative Analysis

Clearly, family life, as we know it, has radically changed over the years. The poorest population in America today is its children. Many impoverished children, who are at-risk for learning, are from single-female headed households. Low-income families struggle each day to survive. Crowded housing and financial constraints leave little space or money for toys, books, and writing materials. Low-income parents, who are holding down one or more low-paying jobs, do not have time, energy, the expertise, or resources to be involved with the literacy development of their young children. Many low-income parents who are lacking education, do not feel comfortable in an educational setting, and may harbor unhappy memories of their past educational experiences. Therefore, their involvement in their children's school setting may be limited because they may still view school as an unwelcoming place.

Lack of parental education combined with a lack of literacy experiences denies children the literacy models in the home necessary for their emergent literacy development. Young children require the support of their families to be successful in school. When that support is denied and/or ignored, for whatever reason, the child cannot be as successful as those children whose parents are supportive. Although parents are concerned about the welfare of their children, they are not aware of their responsibilities and impact as role models on the development of their children.

In the writer's work setting, students arrived in school deficient in experiential learning and literacy skills. Since the children came from rural environments, their first day of preschool was the first time many had traveled outside their home environments.

Limited resources combined with an unavailable public transportation system resulted in children deficient in experiential learning and literacy skills.

Although parents clearly were interested in their children's welfare, they were not aware of their impact as role models on the emergent literacy development of their children. Since the majority of families were headed by single females, male role models involved in literacy experiences were also lacking for these students. Financial constraints, crowded public housing, deficient parental education, low-paying or no job opportunities, domestic violence, and crime contribute to the at-risk status of the children.

In the work setting, parents had actually engaged in physical violence on school grounds. In the past years, the murder of a student's mother was found to be drug-related. Perhaps education, experiential learning, adequate jobs, and literacy could have been helpful in avoiding these kinds of conflicts that are so devastating to the development of young children.

Since eligibility of the children into this program requires applicants to be below-poverty, financial constraints were a major cause for parents not providing literacy experiences for their children at home. Parents did not have the time, energy, skills, or resources to engage in literacy experiences with their children. Making ends meet was a daily battle for them. In addition, the majority of the parents had not completed high school. Many were illiterate or below-level in their literacy skills. Many have had unhappy and unsuccessful experiences in a school setting and have not forgotten those painful memories. Therefore, education and those engaged in it were not supported or respected by the parents.

Parental involvement in the school setting was very limited. Parents perceived school as an unwelcoming place. The children of these parents did not have the support at home necessary for them to be successful in the school setting or the encouragement needed to enhance their emergent literacy development.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

It is old news that the structure of the traditional family has changed. With the onset of structural changes in the family came many new problems for the school, the family, and the community to recognize The causes for these changes are many and complex. In an interview with Andrew Billingley, the author of Climbing Jacob's Ladder, Raspberry (1993), wrote that in 1890, 80% of Black-American households were two-parent. This statistic remained relatively unchanged, even through the Great Depression, until 1970. The statistic began to spiral down to 64%, mainly due to loss of jobs and the disillusion of black institutions.

During the 1950's and '60's, technology and automation drastically reduced the number of blue-collar jobs in the cities where the majority of Black-Americans lived and worked. Now black unemployment is twice that of whites. This caused Black-American females to become disenchanted with the Black-American male as a marriage partner, father, and provider. Integration also affected the black families' support systems. The disillusion of black schools and institutions while integrating into white ones also depleted black support systems. The results of these events, combined with a change in attitude towards lifestyles in the country, resulted in fatherless families that have become the largest segment of poverty in today's society, for both white and minority families.

The number of children living in poverty (all children), according to the Children's Defense Fund (1992), is 1 in 4, with deadly estimates of 10,000 children dying from its effects as of 1991. Children living in persistent poverty have IQ's which are 9.1 points lower by age 5, according to Greg Duncan of the University of Michigan (Rich, 1993). Duncan further states that poverty, more than the mother's education, ethnic origin, and being fatherless contributes to the reduction of the child's IQ. However, combining poverty with fatherless homes results in other negative effects including poor health, low birth weights, emotional and behavior problems, and arriving in school "at-risk" for learning (Beck, 1993).

Comparing the rural-urban status of single-parent female-headed households living in poverty, Cautley (1989) found that single mothers living in small towns and rural areas would experience levels of poverty as high or higher than single mothers living in urban or major city areas. The effect of poverty and being fatherless is devastating for all young children, but particularly for males.

In a speech to the Minneapolis-based Center of the American Experiment in January, 1993, David Blankenhorn stated that boys who grow up without fathers are more likely to live in poverty, behave inappropriately, commit domestic violence and child abuse, and be involved in crime (Raspberry, 1993). Blankenhorn further stated that being fatherless is, "The most important predictor of criminal behavior." In a paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Psychological Association, Berry and Poncini (1982) reported that paternal deprivation resulted in deficits in school achievement, cognitive development, and the emotional development of Australian males between 9 and 12 years of age.

Contributing to the problems of teenage pregnancies, illegitimate births, fatherless homes, and poverty are "anti-family" public programs. Saunders (1993) has stated that government policy has had responsibility contributing to the increase in single-parent households. She cites statistics in California which showed that 1 out of 15 teen-age girls had a baby out of wedlock in 1992, and 1 in 4 had already given birth to at least one other child. State Department of Social Services Director Eloise Anderson calls this phenomenon "false emancipation". Aid to Families of Dependent Children (AFDC) along with changes in cultural attitudes, encourages single-parenthood status by providing teenagers with an apartment, or as Saunders calls it "teen-age independence". Statistics show that in 1987, 54% of AFDC recipients were in their teens when having their first child. Half of these teenagers are still dependent after 5 years.

In 1993, the National Center for Health Statistics announced a 75% increase in illegitimate births during the last decade. Ethnically, 28% of Whites, 37% of Hispanics, and 67% of Blacks will be born to unwed mothers (Beck, 1993). Clearly, since two-thirds of black babies will be born out of wedlock, the new "father" in teenage households has become the welfare system (Raspberry, 1993). When asked what might improve the plight of black families, 41% of the black adults polled identified intact families, 25% identified churches, 14% identified community organizations, and 14% identified government (Newsweek, 1993). Clearly, black adults in this poll felt that government should be the last, not the first alternative to improve the plight of black families. Obviously, the purpose of government should not be to "take care" of the people, but to establish policies by which the people can "take care" of themselves. Thus, the causes and

the effects of poverty and fatherlessness are complex and devastating to the development of young children. As stated by David Broder (1993), "The dissolution of two-parent families, is harmful to many children, and dramatically undermines our society" (B-7).

The cost of illiteracy in our society is devastating. The cost in medical expenses, crime, incarceration, special education and services, and the loss of potentially problem-solving thinkers due to poverty and illiteracy cannot be denied. Forty-three percent of those living in poverty are on the lowest reading level (Sagan & Druyan, 1994). Illiteracy reduces their weekly earning rates by $410 per week. Sagan and Druyan (1994) state:

> If you're preoccupied by the absence of basic family support or dropped into a rolling sea of anger, neglect and self-hatred, you might well conclude that reading takes too much work and just isn't worth the trouble. If you're repeatedly given the message that you're too stupid to learn (or, the functional equivalent, too cool to learn), and if there's no one there to contradict, you might very well buy this advice. (p. 5)

Young children who grow up in a household where there are few or no books, who are not read to, and where parents, other adults, and siblings do not read, will naturally not learn to read. Those in the field of education are all too aware that they, by themselves, cannot "fix" the problem of illiteracy which stems from poverty and its effects. Rich (1991) points out that at the 1990 International Conference on Children and Youth At Risk, which was held in Washington, researchers reiterated that schools cannot solve the problem of "at-risk" children alone. Involvement of parents, families, and the community must be included in the overall strategy.

Although there are many preventive approaches to help at-risk children acquire the

language skills necessary for reading, France and Hager (1993) have found that these preventive measures are diminished when literacy skills of the parents are limited. Segel (1986) points out that parents who do not fit the traditional or middle-class definition, do not enjoy reading, and have not been experienced in becoming reading role models, and do not read books to their children. Toomey (1992) also suggests that low-income parents were very interested in supporting their children's education, but did not feel they had the knowledge or confidence to do so.

Two more reasons why parents do not complete or participate in parent programs are that parents change jobs often, and, families move frequently to new locations (Johnson & Breckenridge, 1981). Having identified many factors which discourage families from being involved in literacy with their children, Bauernfeind's (1990) study found that illiterate parents were the hardest group to encourage their at-risk children to become involved in a family reading program.

During its formative stages, Comer (1991) discovered many "roadblocks" while creating a school intervention program at Yale's Child Study Center. The school and home are the most important institutions in the life of a young, developing child. Yet, parents did not feel comfortable or welcome in the school setting, and the school staff felt parents were apathetic towards their children's school progress. The majority of parents were living in poverty, had poor school experiences resulting in no or low-paying jobs, and generally felt that since the schools had failed them, the schools would fail their children, too. Parents' alienation from, anger, and a general distrust of the school system, resulted in the breakdown of support from home necessary for the child to develop the

skills and attitudes required for school and life successes.

Mavrogenes (1990) states that low-income parents' feelings of incompetence and being at a loss to know how they can be helpful in their children's education, causes parents to feel uncomfortable, distrustful, and insecure in school situations. Holland (1987) has also found that family members of at-risk children are very concerned about their children's education, but do not have the money, time, and/or competencies necessary to support their children's educational endeavors in the home.

Michael (1990) cites national statistics indicating that small rural schools tend to have very few, if any, parent participation. As Comer (1991) states, "Often, even when parents want their children to achieve in school, they are not able to give them the experiences that will enable them to do so" (p. 185).

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The following goals were projected for this practicum:

Parents will acquire the understanding, skills, resources, materials, and wherewithal to support the emergent literacy development of their young children. Parents will experience enjoyment by gaining the confidence necessary to support the emergent literacy development of their young children.

Expected Outcomes

In response to an oral survey, 15 out of 20 students said that they did not read or "just sometimes" read books at home. After the practicum implementation, 20 out of 20 students will state that they have read books at home regularly, 5 to 7 days a week. This oral survey was administered to each individual child through casual conversation, depending upon the developmental level of the child's language abilities. This oral survey should require 5 days to administer.

In response to a written survey (Appendix A), 17 out of 20 parents indicated that they have only 4 to 7 books available at home to read with their children. After the practicum implementation, in response to the same written survey, 20 out of 20 parents will state that they have 10 or more books available at home. The written survey uses a

Likert Scale for parents to respond. To assist parents and to provide parents access to the writer, this survey will be given to parents, individually, at Parent-Teacher conferences.

In response to a written survey, 17 out of 20 parents indicated that they had very little time, limited resources, and limited or no transportation to acquire books read with their children. After the practicum implementation, in response to a written survey, 20 out of 20 parents will indicate that they have read books with their children at home regularly, 5 to 7 days a week. The written survey uses a Likert Scale for responses, and will be given individually to parents at Parent-Teacher conferences.

Attendance records indicated that an average of only 3 out of 20 parents attended workshops regularly throughout the school year. After the practicum implementation, parent participation records will indicate an increase in workshop attendance from 3 out of 20 parents to 10 out of 20 parents in attendance. Parents will sign a Parent Participation Sign-In Sheet for each workshop.

In response to a written survey, 17 out of 20 parents indicated that they felt "somewhat confident" reading to their children. After the practicum implementation, in response to a written survey, 20 out of 20 parents will indicate that they feel "more confident" reading to their children. The survey will be given to parents, individually, at Parent-Teacher conferences. The time required for all parents to complete the written survey during Parent-Teacher conferences was 5 days.

Measurement of Outcomes

To measure the results of Outcome #1, which is to have 20 students state that they have read books at home regularly, 5 to 7 days a week, the writer will interview each student using an oral survey before and after the implementation period. This oral survey was administered to each child through casual conversation, depending upon the developmental level of the child's language abilities. The writer will also predict the results of Outcome #1. Following the completion of the implementation period, the writer will tabulate the pre, predicted, and post results of the oral survey and compare the findings.

To measure the results of Outcome #2, which is to have 20 parents state that they have 10 or more books available at home, the writer will have each parent complete a written survey before and after the implementation period. The written survey uses a Likert Scale for parents to respond. To assist parents and to provide parents access to the writer, this survey will be administered to parents, individually, at Parent-Teacher conferences. The writer will also predict the results of Outcome #2. Following the completion of the implementation period, the writer will tabulate the pre, predicted, and post results of the written survey and compare the findings.

To measure the results of Outcome #3, which is to have 20 parents state that they have read books regularly with their children, 5 to 7 days a week, the writer will have each parent complete a written survey before and after the implementation period. The written survey uses a Likert Scale for responses, and will be administered individually to parents at Parent-Teacher conferences. The writer will also predict the results of Outcome #3.

Following the completion of the implementation period, the writer will tabulate the pre, predicted, and post results of the written survey and compare the findings.

To measure the results of Outcome #4, which is to show an increase of 7 parents in attendance at school workshops, the writer will collect attendance records of the workshops before and after the implementation period. Parents will sign a Parent Participation Sign-In Sheet for each workshop. The writer will also predict the results of Outcome #4. Following the completion of the implementation period, the writer will tabulate the pre, predicted, and post results of the attendance records and compare the findings.

To measure the results of Outcome #5, which is to have 20 parents state that they feel "more confident" reading to their children, the writer will have each parent complete a written survey before and after the implementation period. The written survey uses a Likert Scale for responses, and will be administered individually to parents at Parent-Teacher conferences. The writer will also predict the results of Outcome #5. Following the completion of the implementation period, the writer will tabulate the pre, predicted, and post results of the written survey and compare the findings.

Parents who were unable to attend Parent-Teacher conferences, were to complete and return the written Parent-Survey to school with their child. Once the pre and post oral surveys of the students and the written Parent-Surveys were completed and tabulated, results were to be compared with each other and with the writer's predicted outcomes.

An analysis of the outcomes of this practicum, comparing results before practicum implementation, results predicted to occur after practicum implementation, and, actual

results after practicum implementation will be presented in a table format. (See Table 1).

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

The problem to be solved in this practicum was parents did not have the understanding, skills, resources, materials, and wherewithal to support the emergent literacy development of their young children.

While searching the literature for solution strategies, the writer found that this problem is very complex and solution strategies have been tried in many parts of the country. Spewock (1991) has identified a program, established in rural Pennsylvania, which incorporates the services of the local hospital, pediatricians, and the postal service. This program, designed by the district's preschool staff, distributes "Learning Packets", free of charge to parents, from the time a child is born until the child is eligible to enter school. These packets contain information concerning parenting, child development, and language development. Simply by filling out a postcard and mailing it, parents can become part of this program. The emphasis of this program is to promote early literacy in children by parents reading to them at home. The creators of this program also indicated that these packets promote the enjoyment and relaxation that literacy experiences can bring to families. This program has been successful for more than 300 families for over six years. These packets were also successfully used by parents in conjunction with the

Home-Based Preschool Parent Training Program (Spewock, 1988).

Another successful program increasing parental involvement is the parents' program at the Mildred Magowan School in Edgewater Park, New Jersey (Galen, 1991). This school, in 1988, was designated as a model school in the "Parents as Partners in Learning" project. This community is mostly farmland, multicultural, with the majority of children's parents working outside the home. This program recognized that parents may feel ill at ease participating in their children's education at home or in the school setting. In promoting parent participation, this program incorporated the recommendations of the National Association of State Boards of Education (1988), which included: recognizing that the setting where parents are valued as the main influences in their children's lives is critical for the development of children; parents' self-esteem is crucial for the development of children; parents must be included in decisions concerning early childhood education; access to the educational environment of their children by parents is promoted; and, continuous communication between parents and school staff is essential for the development of children.

This parent involvement program began gradually over ten years ago. One of the unique components of this program was the recognition that some parents may not be able to come to the school setting, but could still participate at home. By supporting and participating in parent-child activities at home, supplied by the school (and created with parent input), such as reading with their children, parents would still be participating in the education of their children. This program, like "Learning Packets", provides reading materials and activities for parents to use at home with their children. Another result of

this program was a renewed respect for teachers by the parents.

Powell (1986) has suggested that it may not be realistic to expect all parents to participate in educational activities at and/or in the school setting. The life situations parents contend with on a daily basis may be beyond the scope of a school program. Moreover, Powell points out that a program that may be effective for a single suburban career mother may not be effective for a poor, single mother in a rural area, or a single father in a big city. These findings would suggest that an effective program must be sensitive and respectful of the living circumstances of parents.

Successful programs, such as the Child and Family Resource Program (Travers et al., 1982), and the Yale Child Welfare Project (Seitz, Rosenbaum, & Apfel, 1985), found positive short- and long-term results by providing "support for" rather than "education of" impoverished parents. These two programs provided parents and children with a large range of social, medical, and family services. These findings suggest that an effective parental participation program is dependent upon school climate established out of respect and support for parents to feel comfortable participating in school-related activities.

Wrobleski (1990), a teacher of young children, answered parents' requests for parent-child activities at home by supplying a "writer's briefcase" for her students. Recognizing that children may not have writing materials at home, she provided the materials and activities for students to participate with their parents at home. The results of this project were very positive. Parents and children expressed enjoyment and anticipation of this project. She is creating parent-child activities with supplies for art and math for the future.

MacCarry (1989) describes a parent-child literacy project whose goal is to provide quality literacy experiences between the parent and child at home. The population targeted for this project was very low-income homes where few, if any, books were available. The families of these children traditionally exclude books from their daily lives. This project provided books to children who were viewed as highly unlikely to ever visit a library. By receiving a grant, the Lee County Library System in Fort Myers, Florida, developed and implemented this project to the Lee County Child Care, Inc., which has seven child-care centers. The age group targeted for this project were 4-and 5-year old, low-income children living in rural areas. This project created a school-based library whereby children and parents could check-out books on a daily basis, similar to a regular library. Each child would be supplied with a personal library card and a book-related activity. The staff were directed to allow the children to become skillful using the library in school first. Once the children became proficient using the library in the school setting, parents received a letter explaining their role encouraging the children to check books out overnight. Although the author of this project has not yet identified its results, he fully expects a successful implementation and satisfying results expressed from staff, children, and parents.

Fractor, Woodruff, Martinez, and Teale (1993), have stated that effective reading habits and the enjoyment of reading is first learned by children in the home. Therefore, if there are few or no books in the home, children will not learn to enjoy reading books. By establishing an effective classroom library, Fractor et al acknowledge that daily accessibility to books can be stimulating for all young readers. They feel that a quality

classroom library can not only contribute to a child's level of reading ability, but also result in a child's reading for pleasure and for information.

Lancy and Nattiv (1992) identified a successful Parent-Assisted Early Reading Program established in the Sunrise School, Utah. This program serves a small farming community in a state where the birthrate is the highest in the country, and where spending on education is the lowest. The goal of this program is to increase parent participation in schools using books. This program presented workshops for parents to participate in a very informal reading activity. These workshops were designed to train parents and grandparents to read to young children. The program was enthusiastically received. Parents would come to school and read to only two children in the classroom's reading corner. Parents volunteered for 90 minutes a day, 5 days a week. To purchase books for the classrooms, the program received a grant which bought books and a loveseat for the book corners. The parents were very excited about this program, but the children responded even more so. This project resulted in a library funded by the school's PTA fund-raising projects after the grant money had been exhausted. The program was able to increase its number of volunteers from 6 to 45. In 1990, the National Council of Teachers of English identified Sunrise School as a "Center of Excellence for Students-At-Risk."

Barclay and Walwer (1992) state that song lyrics are a natural transition between reading and writing in the language arts. Young children easily identify with songs, and their lyrics promote early literacy development. Song picture books, which are also well-known songs, such as "There Was an Old Lady", are meaningful and memorable for young emergent readers. Parents of young children can also easily relate to song picture books,

and may find these kinds of books easier to read with their children at home. These kinds of books are comprised of words and lyrics that are familiar and predictable for both children and parents. Song picture books may help parents feel more at ease reading books at home with their children.

As Rich (1991) has explained, with the current change in family structures, parents are unaware of their impact on the development of their children. She states that educators need to reach beyond schools and families to the whole community to produce positive developmental skills in children. The goal of this program is to implement an educational support system from business and the community, so that parents can reinforce and support educational skills at home. When business and the community are committed to education, parents begin to recognize that education is important. The support given to children, their families, and their schools by business and the community can be perceived by parents as a nonthreatening, encouraging message that parents are the prominent influence in their child's development. Results of this community project, called Tennessee Megaskills, resulted in an increase of parents spending at least 14 minutes a day in educational activities with their children. Another result of this program was parents and children were enjoying the experience together.

France and Hager (1993) have noted that although there are those who believe that workshops for parents will prevent children from experiencing literacy difficulties, this position is unwarranted when parents are deficient in their literacy skills. Parents who have learned the skill of reading aloud to their children through effective workshops have been the most successful in promoting the emergent literacy development of their young

children. The Intergenerational Reading Project cited by France and Hager is an example of providing effective workshops for parents who are limited in literacy skills. According to Holdaway (1979), children who are read aloud to often have a better understanding of story constructions. This project targeted low-income, black families. Parents were encouraged to attend six, one-hour weekly workshops with their children. At these sessions, parents read predictable stories aloud to their children. Parent-child activities were also supplied for parents to use at home with their children between workshops.

France and Hager (1993) found that their project resulted in an overall improvement in student achievement in listening comprehension for low-income, minority students. This project recognized the need to implement a literacy project for parents that would be cost-effective. Therefore, costs associated to this project were limited to reproduction of materials and donation of time by the faculty and staff. Having established this project in over half the schools in Norfolk's school district, project planners have come to realize that the success of the project is directly dependent upon its relationship with parents. They have identified three principles to promote a successful relationship between school and home, which are: Recruit, Respect, and Respond.

As with Rich's (1991) observations, France and Hager agree with the coordinators of this project that when parents realize their importance in the development of their children and are shown the respect necessary for them to participate with educators in that development, parents feel more comfortable and welcome.

Description and Justification for Selected Solutions

Solutions generated from the literature that would be effective in the writer's work

setting were plausible and were successful with certain modifications. Many of the projects and programs cited targeted low-income, minority families living in rural areas.

Providing the practicum population with literacy activities to be used in the home, as in the "Learning Packets" program cited by Spewock (1991), allowed parents to participate in the literacy development of their children. By supplying the families in the practicum with books to be brought home, as cited in the Mildred Magowan School by Galen (1991), parents were able to read a variety of books at home with their children. These solutions eliminated the needs for transportation to the library for parents and for resources necessary to acquire books and writing materials. Combining these programs enhanced the excitement, relaxation, and joy of reading in the home.

Since the preschool setting in which this practicum occurred is primarily a federal program, social, medical, and dental services were provided as needed by families. Therefore, services needed to support families, as cited by Powell (1986), had already been established in the work setting.

Students created their own "briefcases" (child-decorated laminated folders) which held books and writing materials for transport between school and home, as suggested by Wrobleski (1990).

Although a school-based library was suggested by MacCarry (1989), the writer established a Classroom-Home Library in the work setting. Each student was given a personal library card with his/her picture attached for checking out books on a daily basis. Books were supplied by the local business community and service organizations, as suggested by Rich (1991). Picture song books, as cited by Barclay and Walwer (1992),

were also requested. These kinds of books were an effective, nonthreatening, and enjoyable method for encouraging parents to read and sing aloud with their children at home.

Helping parents to become aware of their impact on the literacy development of their young children was accomplished by presentations in three workshops during the twelve-week period. The effectiveness of reading aloud to children at home, as cited by France and Hager (1993), and effective reading skills for young children, as cited by Lancy and Nattiv (1992), were topics presented in the workshops.

The solution strategies designated for solving the problem identified by the writer incorporated solutions found in the literature with ideas created by the writer. Since the goal of this practicum was for parents to acquire the understanding, skills, resources, materials, and wherewithal to support the emergent literacy development of their young children, a literacy program involving parents, teachers and staff, businesses, and community services was established. To reach this goal, parents were provided books, materials and activities, workshops, and classroom activities to promote the emergent literacy development of their young children.

In establishing the project, certain prerequisites took place before the actual implementation. Books were acquired in the least expensive way possible, as suggested by France and Hager (1993). The writer requested donations of books suitable for young children from community organizations and businesses, as encouraged by Rich (1991). Involvement by the community in this literacy project displayed to parents that the business and community organizations were very supportive of education and literacy.

Once the books had been collected and deemed developmentally appropriate for the children, a card holder was placed in the back of each book to hold the library cards and other information for parents. The card holders were attached by parent volunteers.

Students created their own " briefcases" (two-pocket folders), as suggested by Wrobleski (1990). These "briefcases" were used by the children to transport books and writing materials between home and school. As Wrobleski stated, parents and children enjoyed the support and liaison between home and school.

Once the students had completed decorating their "briefcases", the writer laminated the "briefcases" for durability. A logo for the class project and Classroom-Home Library was created to be used on library cards (Appendix B), Parent-Comment Sheets (Appendix C), Parent-Correspondence Sheets (Appendix D), and book markers (Appendix E).

The writer created a story and a song about a bookworm named "Bubbles" (who was the logo for the Classroom-Home Library and the project; Appendix F), to introduce the project to the students. The writer also created a sock puppet of "Bubbles" made from simple materials, such as a sock, felt pieces, wiggly eyes, and pipe cleaners for a pair of glasses.

Once these prerequisites had been accomplished, workshops were established. Three workshops, one for each month of implementation, were held. These workshops were held during regular school hours and included strategies for parents to read aloud with their children at home; the importance of parents in the lives of their developing children; and reading skills and activities appropriate for parents to support the emergent literacy development in their young children. These workshops were fun-filled, hands-on,

make-and-take type workshops, as suggested by Lancy and Nattiv (1992), and France and Hager (1993). Prizes and rewards were given to parents to encourage attendance.

A menu of simple, classroom activities involving literacy were offered to parents by the writer weekly during the implementation period. Parents chose to: read aloud to children in the reading corner during centertime, as identified by Lancy and Nattiv (1992); cook a recipe with a small group of children; play games with children in small groups during centertime; sing and/or write stories with a small group of children at the writing table during centertime. Parents were encouraged to include any other activity they felt comfortable sharing with the class.

Once these activities had been established, and a schedule for their completion and implementation had been set, the writer informed parents (using the logo stationery), about the project and their role in it. This solution strategy solved the problem of providing parents with the understanding, skills, materials, and wherewithal to support the emergent literacy development of their young children.

Once the prerequisites had been established, the actual implementation began. The writer had collected and prepared all the books for distribution. The children's "briefcases", library cards, bookmarkers, Parent-Correspondence Sheets, Parent-Comment Sheets, and precut logos of Bubbles 12 inches in length were ready for each child to decorate. The Bubbles puppet, story, and song were completed for the presentation of the project to the children.

The process objectives for implementation included providing books for children to be read to them by their parents at home on a daily basis. This objective was met by

providing books to be taken home by the children to be read to by their parents at home. The writer knew that the books were read at home by the parents by reading the Parent Comment Sheets which parents completed with each book daily. To meet the objective of increasing parental involvement in literacy activities in school, parents were encouraged and offered the opportunity to participate in nonthreatening literacy activities at school with their children. To meet the objective of increasing literacy skills of parents and children, parents were encouraged and rewarded for participating in the literacy workshops conducted at school.

Report of Action Taken

The following will describe the implementation process in detail. For the actual implementation to take place, the books were collected and prepared for distribution; children's briefcases had been decorated by the children and laminated; library cards and bookmarkers were completed and laminated; Parent- Correspondence Sheets, Parent-Comment Sheets, and precut logos of Bubbles (12 inches in length) ready for each child to decorate had been prepared; and the Bubbles puppet, song, and story were completed for presentation. The writer was able to secure developmentally appropriate books from donations from businesses and service organizations within the community. The collection and preparation of the books for distribution combined with the preparation of the other Classroom-Home Library articles required three months to complete.

Once these "preparation activities" had been completed, implementation of the project began. On the first day of implementation, the teacher introduced the story, song, and puppet of Bubbles to the students. Once storytime was completed, the teacher

divided the class into two groups of ten students each. The teacher was responsible for one group of students and the assistant was responsible for the other group of students. The teacher and assistant explained to the students that they would be able to choose a book to bring home to read with their parents every night.

The teacher and assistant then presented the books to the children, allowing them to browse. As a child selected a book, the teacher and assistant placed the child's library card in the pocket provided on the back of the book along with the child's bookmarker and a Parent-Comment Sheet. The teacher and assistant would fill-out the Parent-Comment Sheet listing the child's name and the title of the book. The book was then placed inside the child's "briefcase". The child was then instructed to place the "briefcase" inside his/her schoolbag to be taken home. The writer highly recommends that the students be required to bring a school bag, preferably a back pack, to school daily.

During centertime, students decorated their precut logos of Bubbles the Bookworm. Once this activity was completed by the students, the teacher and assistant laminated them for durability. These logos were attached to the students' individual work displays located on the walls throughout the classroom. During the duration of this project, the student was given a colored circle sticker to attach to the Bubbles Bookworm for every day a book was read at home and returned to school. Once a child accumulated 10 circle stickers, the child received a reward, such as a paperback book, pencil, bookmark, paper, crayons, etc. Many of these items had been donated by businesses and service organizations. Students did not receive a sticker unless the book was returned and the Parent-Comment Sheet completed by the parent. This stipulation allowed the teacher and

assistant to be aware of books not returned.

Before boarding the bus to depart for home, a Parent-Correspondence Sheet explaining the Classroom-Home Library Project and the parent's role in the project was pinned to each child to be brought home. All these activities were completed on the first day of implementation. The children were very excited and the procedure went very smoothly.

On the second day of implementation, the students arrived very excited about reading the books at home with their parents and were eager to have their parents' comments read to them in class. Therefore, the students actually determined that the "Classroom-Home Library" would become the first order of business in the daily schedule. Once coats were hung and class business had been completed, students were instructed to bring their school bags and "briefcases" to their small groups. Once the two groups had been formed again, students were instructed to browse and select books to be taken home. The teacher and assistant followed the same procedure distributing the books as on the first day. The teacher and assistant did not have to encourage the students to discuss their reading experiences with others. The children were very excited and enthusiastic sharing their experiences and books with each other and their teacher. The teacher and assistant read the Parent-Comment Sheets to the students, which became an anticipated ritual for the duration of the project. Students chose books, placed them in their briefcases, and returned their briefcases to their schoolbags for transport to home. Students were given a sticker to be placed on their Bubbles Bookworms. This activity allowed students to engage in counting to 10, using one- to- one correspondence. This activity also provided

the writing materials needed at home.

The writer was very pleased that all the children present the previous day had returned their books the following school day. The writer was also pleased that each returned book was accompanied by a completed Parent-Comment Sheet, and that parents had followed the procedure as outlined in the Parent-Correspondence letter. This procedure was successfully continued through the rest of the first week of implementation. Also, on the last day of the each week (fifth day), the students brought home books they wrote and illustrated for the weekend. These books were kept at home to become the children's own home library. However, the children insisted on bringing home a "real" book for the weekend. Although the writer did not comply with their wishes at the end of the first week of implementation, the writer relented at the end of the second week. The writer was concerned that the books might not be returned after a weekend. However, the writer's concern was eliminated at the end of the second week. All the children, but one returned books after the weekend.

During the second week of implementation, the writer sent home a Parent Correspondence Sheet congratulating parents for their support and informing them of classroom activities they could choose to participate in. At the bottom of the Parent Correspondence Sheet, parents indicated the activity or activities in which they would like to participate, and returned this portion of the sheet with their child to school. The activities from which parents could choose included reading to one or two children in the book corner; cooking with a small group of children; playing games with a small group of children; participating in writing activities with a small group of children at the writing

table; and any other activity a parent might want to share with the class. Once these activities were tabulated, the writer phoned parents to establish a time convenient for them to participate. Again, the writer feels that had this component of the project occurred at the beginning of the school year, a larger number of parents might have participated. However, the writer was pleased with the increase in the number of parents participating in the workshops.

During the third week of implementation, the writer completed preparations for the first literacy workshop. This workshop was held during the fourth week of implementation. The topic for this first workshop examined effective ways for parents to read aloud to their children. Parents were given well-known storybooks in paperback to practice at home. The Literacy Coordinator for the school district conducted the workshop, while the teacher and assistant provided assistance and materials. Parents were notified of the workshop using the Parent Correspondence Sheets. Additionally, parents received a workshop reminder the day before. At this, and all remaining workshops, parents received prizes for their participation.

The writer discovered that throughout the implementation period, most parents volunteered to participate in classroom activities during the middle of the week. Very seldom did parents volunteer to participate at the beginning or end of the week. Therefore, workshops were always held during the middle of the week, to encourage a greater number of parents to participate. And, even though the writer phoned parents and sent home a note reminding them of the time and activity they had volunteered to participate in, many times parents did not appear or call to cancel. The writer also found

that the same parents participated in the workshops and classroom activities. The writer suspected that transportation to the center was still a major problem for parents. The writer substantiated her hypothesis by orally surveying the parents that had participated. The writer found that the majority of the parents who had participated did not have a job; had transportation; or, were able to carpool with others to school. Some of the parents who did not participate in the workshops or classroom activities were supportive by placing the card holders in the backs of the books.

The teacher and assistant continued the Classroom-Home Library Project using the same procedure throughout the implementation period. The writer continued to call and remind parents of their days to participate in the classroom activities.

During the fifth week of implementation, the teacher and assistant began preparations for the second literacy workshop, which was held during the eighth week of the project. During this workshop, parents participated in a make-and-take workshop, singing and creating props to the book song "There Was an Old Lady". Although the local librarian had been contacted to conduct this workshop, family illness prevented her from doing so. Therefore, the writer conducted the workshop with the assistance of a parent volunteer. During the seventh week of implementation, parents were sent a Parent Correspondence Sheet inviting them to the workshop. Reminders were sent to parents the day before the second workshop.

During the ninth week of implementation, the teacher and assistant began preparations for the third and final literacy workshop. This workshop was held during the middle of the twelfth week of implementation.

During this "make-and-eat" workshop, parents participated in a cooking activity with their children. This workshop, conducted by the teacher and assistant, demonstrated the fun and effective literacy skills children derive from "reading" menus and cooking recipes. Simple recipes, including a playdough recipe, were distributed to the parents to enjoy at home with their children. Also, at the conclusion of the workshop, parents in attendance were given the Parent-Survey to complete and return to school on their appointed Parent-Teacher Conference Day. The children of parents who were not in attendance at the third workshop, were given the Parent-Survey to be completed by their parents and returned to school on their appointed Parent-Teacher Conference Day. This survey provided the information and data from parents necessary to evaluate the results of the project.

Through the conclusion of the twelfth week, the teacher and assistant continued distributing books to the children. The teacher and assistant also continued to notify parents by phone and notes of their appointed times to participate in classroom activities. Parent-Correspondence Sheets were sent to parents inviting them to the third workshop. Parents were sent reminders of the workshop the day before.

During the twelfth week, students were informally interviewed, and an oral survey was conducted by the writer to collect data for evaluating the progress of the practicum implementation. Parent attendance records of the literacy workshops were tabulated. Parent-Teacher Conference dates were established and conducted to accommodate parents. Parents who were unable to attend Parent-Teacher conferences, returned the Parent-Survey to school with their child. Once conferences were completed, the data

from the Parent-Survey were tabulated.

Incidentally, the conclusion of the project coincided with the conclusion of the school year. Therefore, the writer allowed each child to select a book from their Class-Home Library to keep at home and share with their parent. The teacher and assistant sent home a Parent-Correspondence Sheet thanking parents for their participation and support of the project. The writer has no doubt that had there been more time in the school year, the children and their parents would have demanded that the project be continued.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

The problem to be solved in this practicum was that parents did not have the understanding, skills, resources, or materials necessary to provide their children with literature and language arts experiences in the home. Parents did not have the wherewithal to support the emergent literacy development of their young children.

The solution strategy designated for solving the problem identified by the writer incorporated ideas found in the literature with ideas created by the writer. For parents to acquire the understanding, skills, resources, materials, and wherewithal to support the emergent literacy development of their young children, a literacy program involving parents, teachers and staff, businesses, and community services was established. Parents were provided books, materials, activities, workshops, and classroom activities to promote the emergent literacy development of their young children.

The writer initially began surveying 20 students and 20 parents during the initial phase of this practicum. However, after completing four weeks of the implementation phase, two students moved away from the center. Therefore, the results derived from this practicum are based upon data compiled from surveys of 18 students and 18 parents.

In response to an oral survey, 15 out of 20 students stated that they did not read or

"just sometimes" read books at home. After the practicum implementation, the writer predicted that 20 out of 20 students would state that they read books at home regularly, 5 to 7 days a week. After the practicum implementation, results of an oral survey indicated that 18 out of 18 students stated that they read books at home regularly, 5 to 7 days a week. Thus, Outcome #1 was achieved. The oral survey was administered to each child through casual conversation. Examples of developmentally appropriate oral responses for 4-year-olds, indicating the factor of "5 to 7 days a week" included: "We reads my book with my Mamma every night before I goes to sleep"; and, " We read after I eat my dinner". The oral survey required 5 days to administer.

In response to a written survey , 17 out of 20 parents indicated that they have only 4 to 7 books available at home to read with their children. After the practicum implementation, in response to the same survey, the writer predicted that 20 out of 20 parents would state that they had 10 or more books available at home. The results indicated that 17 out of 18 parents stated that they had 10 or more books available at home. One parent did not complete and return the written survey to the writer. Thus, the writer concludes that Outcome #2 was achieved based on the results obtained.

The written survey used a Likert Scale for parents to respond. To assist parents and to provide parents access to the writer, this survey was given to the majority of parents, individually, at Parent-Teacher conferences. Parents who were unable to attend Parent-Teacher conferences completed the survey at home and returned it to school with their child.

In response to a written survey, 17 out of 20 parents indicated that they had very

little time, limited resources, and limited or no transportation to acquire books to read with their children. After the practicum implementation, in response to a written survey, the writer predicted that 20 out of 20 parents would indicate that they had read books with their children at home regularly, 5 to 7 days a week. The results of the written survey indicated that 17 out of 18 parents stated that they had read books with their children at home regularly, 5 to 7 days a week. One parent did not complete and return the written survey to the writer. Again, the writer concluded that Outcome #3 was met. The practicum implementation eliminated the need for transportation and resources, and allowed time for parents to read with their children. The written survey used a Likert Scale for responses, and was given individually to parents at Parent-Teacher conferences. Parents who were unable to attend Parent-Teacher conferences completed the written survey at home and returned it to school with their child.

Attendance records indicated that an average of only 3 out of 20 parents attended workshops regularly throughout the year. After the practicum implementation, the writer predicted that the parent participation records would indicate an increase in workshop attendance from an average of 3 out of 20 parents to an average of 10 out of 20 parents in attendance. Tabulation of the workshop attendance records after the practicum implementation indicated an increase in parent attendance from an average of 3 out of 20 parents to an average of 5 out of 18 in attendance. Thus, Outcome #4 was not achieved, even though an increase was shown. Parents signed a Parent Participation Sign-In Sheet for each workshop.

In response to a written survey, 17 out of 20 parents indicated that they felt

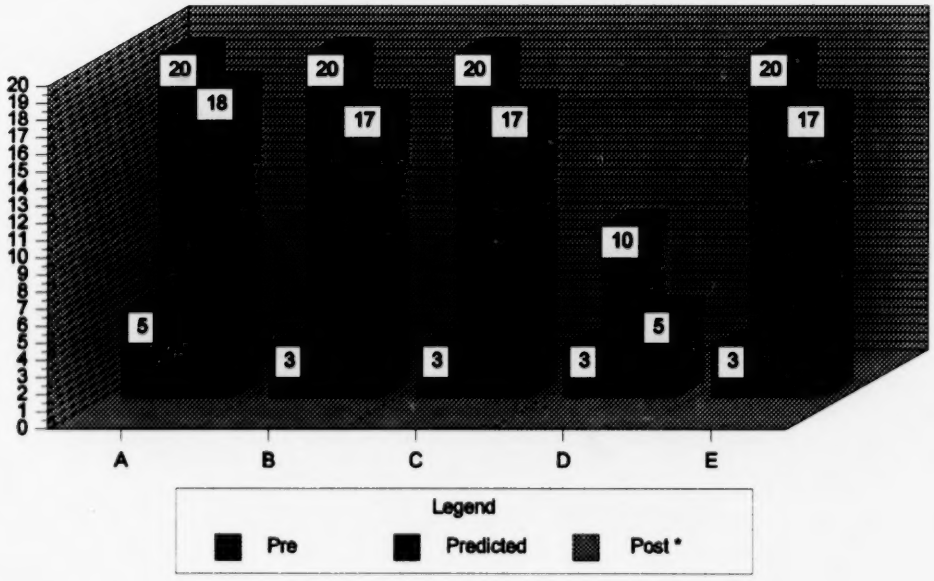
"somewhat confident" reading to their children. After the practicum implementation, the writer predicted that in response to a written survey, 20 out of 20 parents would indicate that they felt "more confident" reading to their children. The results of the written survey indicated that 17 out of 18 parents felt "more confident" reading to their children. Thus, Outcome #5 was achieved. As mentioned previously, one parent did not complete and return the written survey to the writer.

The time required for all parents to complete the written survey during Parent-Teacher conferences was 5 days.

An analysis of the outcomes of this practicum, comparing results before practicum implementation, results predicted to occur after practicum implementation, and, actual results after practicum implementation are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Pre, Predicted, Post Survey Comparison



* Lost 2 children during Implementation

A = Number of students indicating that they have read books at home, 5 to 7 days a week

B = Number of parents indicating that they have 10 or more books available at home

C = Number of parents indicating that they have read books with their children at home, 5 to 7 days a week

D = Number of parents attending workshops

E = Number of parents indicating that they feel "more confident" reading to their children

Discussion

One of the results of this project was that all the children indicated in an oral survey that books were being shared with their parents daily. In the conversations with the children, it became apparent that this activity not only exposed the children to literature, but also became a vehicle by which the children and their parents became closer. The students indicated to the writer that the time designated at home for reading books was a very special time of day for them. As Taylor and Strickland (1986) and Dickinson (1989) have stated, parents who read books to their children create an environment where opportunities for academic success have increased and where children associate reading books with feelings of warmth, safety, and joy.

The writer found that the Classroom-Home Library created a liaison between school and home and home and school, as indicated by Wrobleski (1990). In casual conversations, the children expressed their excitement and enthusiasm for having their parents read to them daily from books brought home from school. It was as if one merged with the other, and the impact upon the children and their parents was the realization that school and home were interdependent and supportive. The writer had expected that the children would be excited about the project, but could not possibly have anticipated the extent and dedication to the project that the children had shown.

As noted earlier, the children insisted that the Classroom-Home Library become the first activity of the day. Of course, the writer changed the class schedule to accommodate their request.

Other unanticipated results of the project for the children were that they became more

responsible with their belongings, and their self-help skills increased. No child wanted to be without a book. Therefore, the majority of them consistently brought their folders in their backpacks every day. By counting the stickers they earned and placing them on their individual Bubbles Bookworm, they very quickly learned to count to 10 using one-to-one correspondence. The writer was very pleased that the language skills, particularly of the non-verbal students, had increased. Just by reading and discussing the books with adults and peers, all the students were able to increase their literacy and language skills.

Another result of this project was that parents stated that they had 10 or more books available at home. The Classroom-Home Library concept supplied families with a variety of developmentally appropriate books daily. The writer had explained to parents in the introductory letter that reading aloud to their children was considered the single most important activity parents can do to promote academic success (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985). By establishing a library liaison between school and home, parents who previously had little or no access to books for their young children, now had access and a variety from which to choose. A large number of the library's books and writing materials were donated or offered at a reduced rate by businesses and community organizations, as suggested by Rich (1991) and France and Hager (1993).

The home-library created by the accumulation of the child-made books brought home every week by the children, also increased the number of books available to be read by the children at home. This activity allowed the children to not only enhance their literacy skills in reading and writing, but also increase their language and social skills.

Card pockets were attached to the back of each book by parent volunteers. Parent-

Comment Sheets, Parent-Correspondence Sheets, Library Cards with the child's picture attached, and Bookmarkers were made displaying the library logo of "Bubbles the Bookworm", as suggested by MacCarry (1989) and the writer. Students created their own "briefcases" which were laminated by the writer for durability to transport the books and writing materials between school and home (Wrobleski, 1990). The writer was able to account for books by inspecting the Parent-Comment Sheets accompanying the books every morning.

An unanticipated result of supplying the books for the families was the respectful maintenance and care the books received. Since many of the books were used, the writer anticipated that their handling by so many might result in a high number of destroyed books. However, the writer found that many books had been repaired and/or well-maintained by the families. In fact, although 20 books were sent home and returned to school daily, less than 10 books had been lost or destroyed at the conclusion of the implementation period.

Another unanticipated result was the enthusiastic support of the parents. The Parent-Comment Sheets allowed the writer to communicate with parents daily. Many would write comments about the book they had read. The students couldn't wait for their teacher to read the parent comments aloud to the other students. Often parents would write an additional note to the teacher. One parent wrote that this project had solved the problem of putting her child to bed. Her child now looked forward to reading her book right before bedtime. Another parent wrote that her child insisted that the book be read right after school, eliminating his usual cartoon watching in the afternoon.

The Parent-Comment Sheets also allowed parents to enhance the writing and language skills of their children by modeling appropriate literacy behaviors.

In response to a written survey, 17 out of 18 parents stated that they had read books with their children 5 to 7 days a week. These results indicated that parents who had very little time, limited resources, and limited or no transportation, would be supplied books to read with their children daily. The Classroom-Library eliminated the needs for parents to find the time, to have the resources, and to find transportation to school or the public library to acquire books. These books were supplied to families daily. Therefore, by inspecting the Parent-Comment Sheets, the writer was able to ascertain that books had been read by families daily. This component of the project recognized that some parents would not come to the school setting, but still could participate at home (Galen, 1991; Powell 1986).

The Parent-Comment Sheets indicated to the writer that many times adults other than the child's parent had read the books. Siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other adults often completed the Parent-Comment Sheet. Some of the students stated that family members often competed for the privilege of reading the books to the students. This revelation by the children indicated that this project may have increased the number of reading role models for the children.

Attendance records indicated an increase in workshop participation from an average of 3 out of 20 parents to 5 out of 18 parents in attendance. These results were less than anticipated by the writer. The writer had predicted that attendance would increase from an average of 3 out of 20 parents to an average of 10 out of 20 parents in attendance.

From the Parent Participation Sign-In Sheets, the writer was able to determine that the 5 parents in attendance were present for all three workshops. These 5 parents were also the same and only parents who had consistently participated in the Parent-Activities in the classroom.

The writer has determined from oral conversations with the 5 parents why they were able to attend the workshops and the Parent-Activities in the classroom. All 5 indicated that they did not have jobs, had transportation or could carpool to school, and had a baby sitter or no children at home during the day. These findings may be reasons why the other parents could not attend. This result points out Michael's (1990) finding that small, rural schools tend to have very limited parent participation.

Seventeen out of 18 parents had indicated in a written survey that they felt "more confident" reading to their children. Goldenberg (1989) has pointed out that parents with low educational skills have sufficient literacy skills to read with their young children. The writer determined from conversations with parents at the Parent-Teacher conferences, that parents who felt inadequate reading aloud to their children felt more confident after realizing the lower level of the word print in many of the books. Therefore, the reading level of the parents usually matched the reading level of the books. In fact, one parent indicated that he and his son were learning "words together".

Parents who had attended the workshops had indicated that they had not realized their impact on the emergent literacy development of their children. This realization by the parents is supported by Rich (1991). Furthermore, they indicated that the workshops had been fun and meaningful. The writer suspects that the small number of parents in

attendance reduced their anxieties concerning participating in the workshops. The topics chosen for the workshop presentations were well received by the parents. Of the three workshop held, parents stated that their favorite workshop was the second one which involved singing and creating the props for the song picture book, "There Was an Old Lady". This activity had been identified by Barclay and Walwer (1992). Parents stated that the children enjoyed this story and constantly requested that their parents repeat it. Due to the predictability of the story, parents indicated that this kind of book was easier for them to read to their children. Therefore, for these parents the workshops apparently increased their confidence and self-esteem reading to their children. As France and Hager (1993) have found, parents who have learned the skill of effectively reading aloud to their children through workshops are more successful in increasing the literacy skills of their children than parents who have not.

In summary, the problem to be solved in this project was that parents did not have the understanding, skills, resources, materials, and wherewithal to support the emergent literacy development of their young children. To solve this problem, a classroom-home library was created and implemented. Literacy workshops and parent-child literacy activities in the classroom were held. The project began with 20 students and their parents. However, during the implementation period, 2 students moved away, leaving 18 students and their parents to complete the project. The outcomes to increase the number of books available for parents to read more confidently and regularly to their young children at home were achieved. Only one outcome, which was to increase the number of parents attending workshops, was not achieved. These results were obtained using oral

and written surveys.

Unanticipated outcomes included an extraordinary dedication to the Classroom-Home Library by the students and their parents. Every day of the implementation period, almost every student brought books home and brought them back the following day. Children and parents indicated that the project had brought them closer to one another. Children, also, became more responsible with their belongings; increased their self-help skills; became more skillful in counting to 10, using one-to-one correspondence; enhanced their literacy skills in reading and writing; and, improved their language and social skills. Parents and students brought books back to school in good condition. Parents indicated that the project had helped to eliminate home conflicts with their children, and, had enticed other family members to become involved.

Overall, the project was very successful. Although parent participation in the classroom activities and their attendance at the literacy workshops did increase from 3 to 5 parents, transportation to school and daytime jobs appear to be the reasons why the number of parents participating were not as high as the writer had anticipated.

As effective as this project was for the writer's students and their parents, the writer was not able to implement the project until late in the school year. The writer feels that implementing the project at the very beginning of the school year would have been more effective for the students and their parents.

Recommendations

Since the writer found the process of acquiring and preparing books for distribution to be quite time-consuming, the writer would make the following recommendations for

this project: 1. The writer would recommend that the collection and selection of books be developmentally appropriate, and preparation for the distribution of books be planned and completed well in advance of actual implementation. These "preparation activities" should be completed before students arrive at the beginning of the school year. 2. The writer would recommend that the collection of books be obtained at little or no cost by requesting donations of used books in good condition and/or new books from social service agencies, garage sales, flea markets, businesses, and by writing and requesting donations of new and discontinued books from well-known children's book companies. The writer has found that the acquisition of new and used books is an on-going process. Therefore, the writer has continued requesting and acquiring books in the manner aforementioned.

Dissemination

In disseminating the practicum results, the writer was able to discuss the project with colleagues in the Nova Southeastern Doctoral Program during the 1994 Summer Institute in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Those who were particularly interested in literacy for the families of young, at-risk children reacted in a positive way, intimating that this project might be one which could be easily implemented into their programs. Since the goal of this project was for parents to acquire the skills necessary to support the emergent literacy development of their young children in a reasonable, simple, and effective manner, this project has proven to be successful overall.

Plans to disseminate the results of this practicum to the writer's colleagues in the writer's work setting have been made. The writer will present the project to colleagues

during a "planning day" to be scheduled during the next year.

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APPENDIX A

PARENT SURVEY

Parent Survey

Directions: Read each below. Circle the point on the line that is most true for you.

1. In our home, we have approximately _____ books available for my child to read.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
0	1-3	4-7	10	10+

2. I have _____ time to read to my child.

☐	☐	☐
no time	very little	plenty of time

3. I _____ have enough money to buy books for my child to read.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
never	hardly ever	sometimes	usually	nearly always

4. I _____ have transportation to get books from the library and attend workshops at school.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
never	hardly ever	sometimes	usually	nearly always

5. I _____ read books aloud to my child.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
never	rarely	several times a week	almost every day	at least once daily

6. I _____ read books, newspapers, magazines, or other printed materials.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
never	rarely	several times a week	almost every day	at least once daily

7. Since this program provides access to many services for children and their families, I am _____ interested in knowing more about the program for improving reading and writing for parents.

☐	☐	☐	☐
not at all	slightly	somewhat	very

8. I _____ confident reading aloud to my child.

☐	☐	☐	☐
do not feel	feel a little	feel somewhat	feel more

APPENDIX B

LIBRARY CARDS

Library
Card
1994

Library
Card
1994

Library
Card
1994

Library
Card
1994

70

71

APPENDIX C

PARENT COMMENT SHEETS

Parent Comments

Child's Name: _____

Book Title: _____

Parent Comments: _____

_____

_____

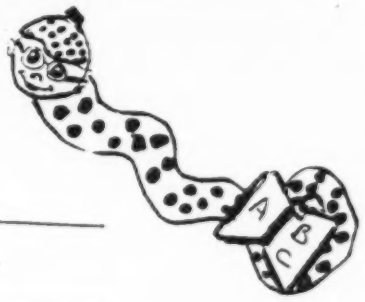
Child's Name: _____

Book Title: _____

Parent Comments: _____

_____

_____



Child's Name: _____

Book Title: _____

Parent Comments: _____

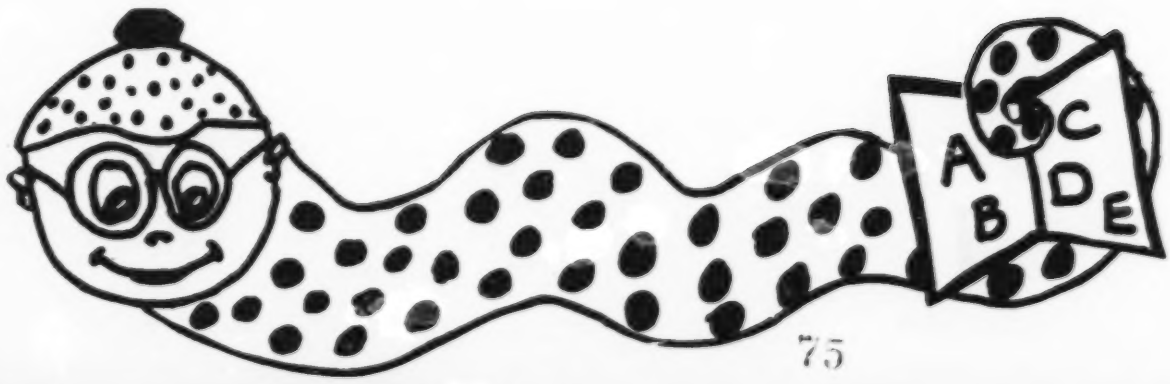
_____

_____

APPENDIX D

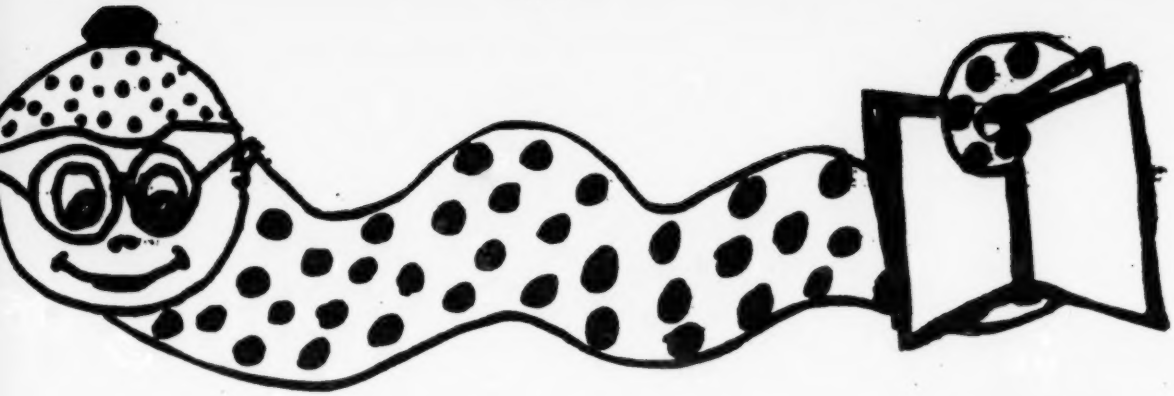
PARENT CORRESPONDENCE SHEET

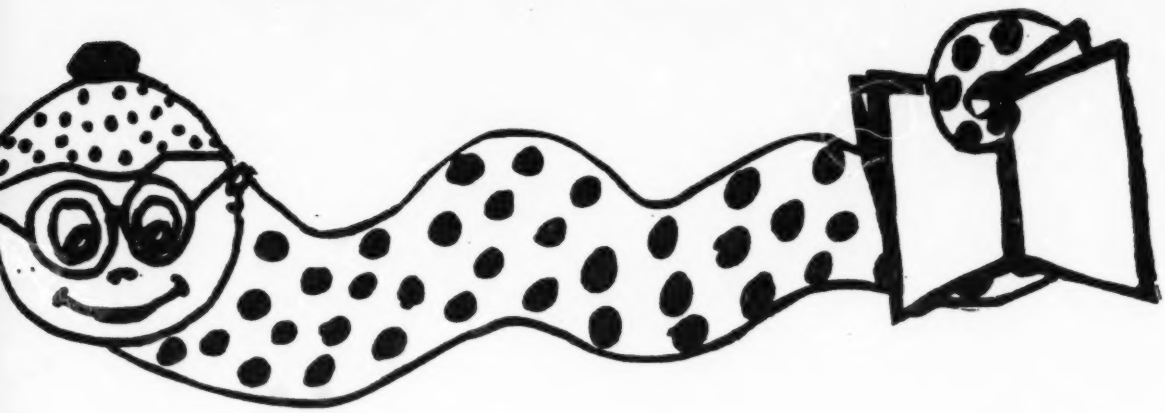
Dear Parents,

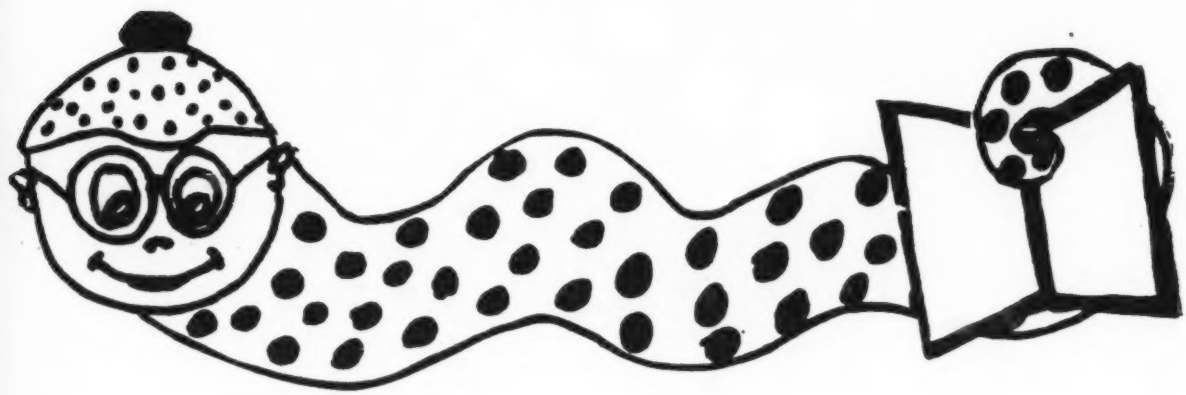


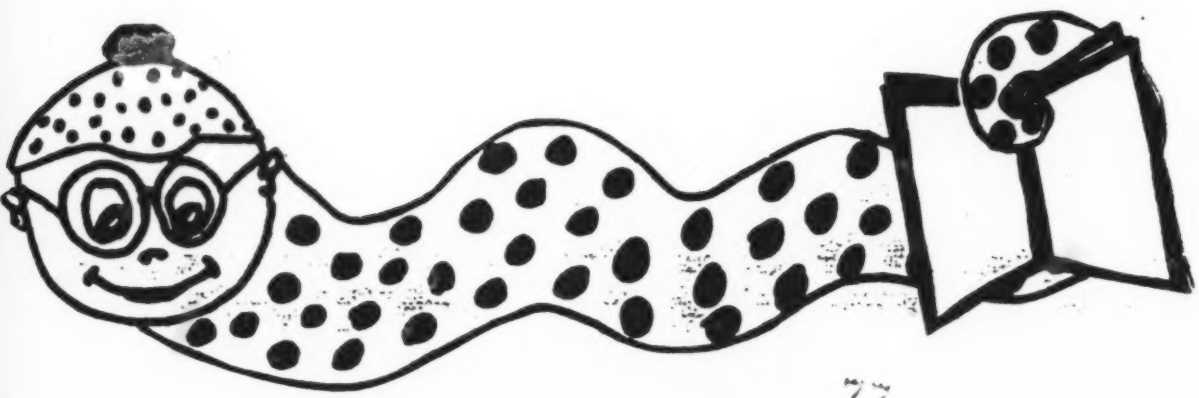
APPENDIX E

BOOKMARKERS









APPENDIX F

STORY AND SONG OF BUBBLES

THE STORY OF BUBBLES

(Story Preparation: To be used with the Bubbles sock puppet. Use of a frog puppet will enhance the story, but is not necessary. A colorful sack containing books about Disney, dinosaurs, airplanes, and jungle animals will be needed. The storyteller may use the story as is or have Bubbles tell the story.)

Once upon a time, there was a worm named "Bubbles". His name was Bubbles because he liked to take lots of bubble baths. But, Bubbles was not a very happy worm. He wanted to travel to far, distant, and exciting places. While taking his bubble baths, he would dream about going to Disney World, or playing with the dinosaurs, or flying an airplane, or even eating bananas in the jungle with the monkeys. But, poor Bubbles knew he would never get to do these things. He was too little to crawl to Disney Word. All the dinosaurs were gone (you know, "extinct", as they say). So, he knew he would never be able to play with them. He didn't have wings to fly like an airplane. And, he was too far away to go to the jungle and eat bananas with the monkeys. He was so sad! Then, one day, Friendly Frog jumped by. She could see that Bubbles was very sad. "Why are you so sad?" asked Friendly Frog. "Well," answered Bubbles. "I want to travel and visit Disney World, play with the dinosaurs, fly like an airplane, and eat bananas in the jungle with the monkeys. But, I can't. I'm too small to crawl to Disney World. All the dinosaurs are gone. I don't have wings to fly like an airplane. And, the jungle is too far away for me to eat bananas with the monkeys." Bubbles began to cry, real loud. "There, there, Bubbles," answered Friendly Frog giving him a tissue. Bubbles blew his nose real loud. "There has got to be a way to solve your problem. Let me think a minute." Friendly Frog thought, and she thought, and she thought, until . . ."I know," she said excitedly. "I know exactly how you can do all those things. You can read books. You know, when you read books, you can go anywhere, be anything or anyone, and do everything you want to do! You wait right here and I'll be right back!" Friendly Frog leaped away, but not for long. Soon, she was back, with a mysterious sack filled with something. "Guess what I have in my sack?" she asked excitedly. "I don't know," answered Bubbles. He asked, "Is it an apple?" "No," answered Friendly Frog, giggling. "Is it a dead fly? I know you like dead flies," asked Bubbles. "No, silly," answered Friendly Frog. "Is it magic?" asked

Bubbles. "You guessed it!" shouted Friendly Frog. She dumped the contents of the sack onto the ground. There, all around them were wonderful, exciting books. There were books about Disney World. There were books about the dinosaurs. There were books about airplanes and birds who knew how to fly. And there were books about the jungle, with elephants, tigers, and monkeys eating bananas. Well, Bubbles was so excited, he didn't know which book to read first. Class, let's vote. Which book should Bubbles read first? (Take a vote by children raising hands). Well, then, Bubbles will read the book you chose for him first. Bubbles was so happy. Now he could go anywhere he wanted, be anything or anyone he wanted, and do anything he wanted by reading books. He was so thankful to Friendly Frog, that he gave her a big worm hug. She giggled again. Now, everyone who knew Bubbles stopped calling him "Bubbles the Worm". Now they are calling him "Bubbles the Bookworm", because he even reads books while taking his bubble bath!

BUBBLES SONG (Tune: Bingo)

Bubbles, the bookworm, loved to read,
And he read a lot of books, oh,
B-O-O-KS, B-O-O-KS, B-O-O-KS (clap hands for each letter)
And Bubbles loved to read ,oh

He read everything that he could find,
He read books in the bathtub,
B-O-O-KS, B-O-O-KS, B-O-O-KS, (clap hands for each letter)
And Bubbles loved to read, oh.